

**IN THE CLAIMS**

Please amend the following claim:

1. (Amended, renumbered from Claim 59) A method for modifying a tobacco curing barn provided with a direct fire heating unit for the purpose of providing conditions suitable for curing tobacco such that resulting cured tobacco obtained from said barn possesses a tobacco-specific nitrosamine content lower than 2 parts per million, the method comprising:

removing the direct fire heating unit from the tobacco barn,

providing the tobacco barn with a heating unit that does not generate exhaust gases comprising nitric oxides in a fashion that would cause contact between said nitric oxides and said tobacco within said barn, and further modifying said barn to permit correlation of the tobacco-specific nitrosamine content of said cured tobacco with the actual level of nitric oxides to which said tobacco is exposed in said barn, wherein said barn as modified may be used for the curing of tobacco leaves.

SERIAL NO. 09/735,177

DOCKET NO.: 3843-002-27 CONT

**MARKED-UP COPY OF AMENDED CLAIMS**

1. (Amended, renumbered from Claim 59) A method for modifying a tobacco curing barn provided with a direct fire heating unit for the purpose of providing conditions suitable for curing tobacco such that resulting cured tobacco obtained from said barn possesses a tobacco-specific nitrosamine content lower than [that obtained prior to such modification,] 2 parts per million, the method comprising:

removing the direct fire heating unit from the tobacco barn,

providing the tobacco barn with a heating unit that does not generate exhaust gases comprising nitric oxides in a fashion that would cause contact between said nitric oxides and said tobacco within said barn, and further modifying said barn to permit correlation of the tobacco-specific nitrosamine content of said cured tobacco with the actual level of nitric oxides to which said tobacco is exposed in said barn, wherein said barn as modified may be used for the curing of tobacco leaves.